

Amiens, Orleans, Poitiers, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Saintes, Angoulême, Nantes, and Tours. In due time Rollo, a Danish chieftain, landed with a swarm of these Normans on the shores of France; captured a maritime province of that country, called it Normandy, after the name of its new proprietors—Neustria had been its name previously,—and commenced to consolidate his forces there, and prepare to take advantage of any other opening that might present itself. To the brave there are always opportunities, and accordingly in 1066, hearing there was an opening in England, these terrible Normans, under Duke William, swarmed over in a thousand war-ships to the British shores, defeated the English at the battle of Hastings, and seized the country—which they have held ever since to this day.

Such were the stirring people who sent forth the earliest voyagers to the Northern Seas. But as the earliest voyages were not productive in any special degree of results, with which our purpose is concerned, we shall have only a very few words to say about these early navigators.

It cannot be said that the earliest of these Norse voyagers were gentlemen of any very eminent social status. Among the first of them was Naddod the Viking, who, in sailing to the Faroe Isles, was driven away westward by an easterly gale, until he discovered (in 861) a great island covered with snow, and to which he therefore gave the name Snowland. Another adventurer, named Gardar, visited the island three years after, found it a tolerable, even a pleasant region, wintered upon it, gave it his own name (Gardar's-holm), and returning to his native Sweden, spread abroad such a glowing account of its fair woods and fertile soil, that he inflamed the mind of one of his countrymen, one Floki, to set out and find the new island. Floki found it, wintered upon it, observed that its bays and fiords seemed to be always full of ice, and consequently gave it a new name—Iceland, which name it still retains.

And with the discovery towards the close of the ninth century of that lonely island,

“Placed far amid the melancholy main,”

we have made the first step towards the discovery of lands that lie still farther to the north—the first step towards the discovery of the North-West Passage—of the North Pole itself.

About a hundred years later, another Norseman, named Thorwald, having qualified himself for adventure on sea by previously committing murder on land, set sail for Iceland. He was followed shortly afterwards by his son Eric, who it appears had also been guilty of murder and of many irregularities, and who, sailing westward, landed, in 982, on a strange shore, and wintered on an inlet on the coast, which was named after him, Eric's Sound. Finding the country a pleasant one, its coasts abounding in fish, its valleys rich in meadowland, and its hills covered with verdure, he